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ABSTRACT

The primary objective of the Regional University Administrator's Institute held at Northern Michigan University in the summer of 1970 was to analyze communication dilemmas between hierarchical positions and construct a heuristic model of a higher education administrative communication and decisionmaking process. There is growing evidence of improved administrative procedures installed by participants in the Institute. There are expressions of confidence in performing an administrative role and in involving faculty in decisionmaking. In addition, there are expressions on the evaluation forms that clearly indicate individual growth and sophistication in the administrative role. Of the 94 participants at the institute, 93 stated that they would be interested in further broadening their administrative capacities at another similar institute. (HS)

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I. Basic Information

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The special project was planned by a planning committee composed of representatives from Michigan Technological University, Lake Superior State College, Suomi College, Bay de Noc Community College, Gogebic Community College, and Northern Michigan University. In addition, all participants from other universities completed Needs Survey questionnaires to augment similar planning documents completed by the administrators from the six core institutions.

The primary responsibility for planning, coordination, and implementation was assumed by Northern Michigan University.

The Director corresponded on numerous occasions with Dr. David Booth, Director, New Department Chairmen Program, Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, to exchange program ideas and methodology and to identify appropriate and effective resource people.

In addition to WICHE, assistance was received from the American Association of Junior Colleges and numerous personal contacts with authorities in the field.

- D. July 22-24, 1970.

II. Program Focus

- A. Objectives and Related Need

Societal pressures in the 70's threaten academic traditions and institutions as we have known them in ways far more sinister than ever before. The whole concept of change has been revised so that new political dimensions are being reckoned with.

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Human resources needed to deal with these new and radical events have not caught up to the action. Interpreting our problems is as perplexing a process as the decisions that have to be made. "Involvement" seems to be the "thing" these days, whether the "thing" is good or bad. We examine our administrative principles and concepts for help, but the standard answers seem to lack relevance.

The planning committee for the Regional University Administrators' Institute recognized that basic to any comprehension of our dilemmas in higher education was an analysis of our communication procedures. As our plans developed we knew we were on the right track for no matter what issue we explored we were faced with the need for communication skills.

Objective 1 - Analyze Communication Dilemmas Between Hierarchical Positions and Construct a Heuristic Model of a Higher Education Administrative Communication and Decision Making Process.

The needs survey (see appendix) completed by administrators from the six planning universities disclosed a heavy interest in communication. However, the main specific concerns were communications between administration and faculty (5 responses); up and down communication (6 responses); decision making approaches (6 responses); and other responses dealing with campus organization many of which reflect communication dilemmas.

To achieve this objective, we secured one of the outstanding authorities in the field of communications, Dr. Ralph Nichols, Head of the Department of Rhetoric, University of Minnesota. Our goals and needs were clearly "communicated" to Dr. Nichols and much time was spent analyzing our situations and the methodology to be employed at the Institute. It was our design to analyze communication barriers as disclosed in the survey and to provide recommended solutions utilizing four techniques; (1) a formal presentation, (2) small group discussions with feedback sessions, (3) interest discussion groups under the direction of the principle speakers, and (4) a summary session of the four major topical areas again featuring the four principle speakers. The evaluation results express the excellent results achieved.

We partially attained our objective of designing a hierarchical model by setting up the principles and concepts and illustrating case examples for individual

campus situations. We underestimated the problem of adaptability of a single model. However, we are satisfied that participants can achieve changes in a local communication system by applying the information presented. A further analysis is presented in other sections of this report.

Objective 2-The all-university planning committee concluded from earlier institutes that each campus presents unique administrative arrangements, budget procedures and operational philosophy. We consequently have encouraged participants to set up follow-up meetings on the home campus. Our proposal provides for one of our consultants, Dr. Andre Delbecq, to spend one day each with administrators at Lake Superior State College, Michigan Technological University, and Northern Michigan University. Since these universities are only now underway for the fall semester, we expect our planning to take place in October. Also, we await instructions from Mr. Adams as to how to meet expenses

This activity will require a supplementary report.

Objective 3-As a result of the 1969 Institute, follow-up training was carried out at participant institutions varying from weekly breakfast study sessions at Michigan Tech to an administrators retreat held off-campus by Lake Superior State College.

The planning committee will assist each of the six institutions in the Upper Peninsula to establish organized training sessions to meet individual and institutional needs. The results of this activity will be provided in a supplemental report.

B. Major Emphasis of Training

There is no doubt that our planning committee designed the Institute (1) to provide for the development of knowledges, (2) attitudes and methods, and (3) skills. However, we integrated the three areas so all would be logical outcomes of each session. New skills and methods is also new knowledge. Acceptance of change, which also permeated each session, brings about attitudinal change to some degree. How did the participants react?

Question 13 on the OE 1216 form asked, "Indicate which one of focus in the training program was of primary value to you in your professional development by ranking the following:

	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
Content	9	11	12	21
Attitude Change	24	20	11	5
Methodology	2	16	13	9
Communication	35	17	10	1

The tally of responses would strongly indicate support for our major objective "Communications." It also would indicate that participants thought of "communications" and "content" as in the same definition. So we feel we had the proper focus in terms of planning direction. However, we were not sure of the significance of "Attitude Change." Apparently a representative number of participants recognized an attitude change which had to reflect impact of new knowledge, clarification of problem areas or from some type of idea confrontation in the group discussions.

Finally, we are firmly convinced that the highly positive evaluation data clearly supports this type of training experience. The paucity of training opportunities is an appalling fact of life in higher education. The need for training is an established fact, and we are appreciative of the opportunity to plan and implement the Institute.

III. Program Operation

A. Participants

1. The planning committee is very satisfied with applicant response. In our proposal, we were obligated to regional considerations for applicant selection. However, the 1970 proposal provided for the enlargement of our geographic region and to seek attendance from six universities located 150 miles from our original boundaries. We were fortunate to have representatives from Lawrence University, University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, Northland College, Ferris State College, Alma College, Wayne State University, and even accepted the application of the Chancellor of Indiana University Southeast because of his deep interest in the program.
2. Our proposal provided for attendance by members of Boards of Trustees at Lake Superior State College, Michigan Technological University, and Northern Michigan University. The Honorable John L. Farley represented Northern Michigan University, but emergency business situations prevented the other two people from attending. Mr. Farley was highly enthusiastic of the Institute and made a complete report to the NMU Board of Control.

3. The chairman of the Academic Senate of Northern Michigan University attended and found the experience informative and helpful.
4. Our grant provided for ninety participants. Actually, we were able to accommodate ninety-seven plus a number of faculty and student observers.
5. Our basic criteria for applicant selection were these:
 - (a) Academic administrators or those closely related to academic activities, such as, the Admissions Office, Librarian, Registrar, and Continuing Education.
 - (b) All applicants to be department heads, deans, vice presidents or presidents - all having administrative roles.
 - (c) The proposal did require geographic considerations to provide for a recognized commonality of needs. We had inquiries from institutions in Texas, New York, Puerto Rico, Vermont and California, in addition to the neighboring states of Iowa, Illinois, Ohio, West Virginia, Kansas, Kentucky, and Missouri. Our 1971 proposal will invite institutions from many of these states because of their great interest shown in our program.
 - (d) We did not utilize standardized tests, academic attainment, age, recommendations, degrees or interviews as basis for applicant selection. We feel the "university administrator" category precludes the need for the above criteria for selection. We selected administrators according to academic designations - department head, dean (or assistant and associate dean), vice president or president and assistants thereto. This procedure gave us the administrative mix we wanted.

Our 1968, 1969 and 1970 institutes revealed the value in having the administrative hierarchy present. We feel this procedure enables the process of change to take place in a more productive way since the various echelons are present hearing the same information. Plans for change at the local campus level are likely to receive favorable support with decision makers present at the Institute.

We believe our recruiting procedure next year must give priority attention to presidents and vice presidents of the institutions attending. Their attendance is crucial not only for indications of support and interest but for understanding of the information, ideas, and new concepts which motivate change.

The planning committee fully supports the objective of inviting members of the Boards of Trustees to also attend. One member of the Board of Control of Northern Michigan University attended. He was elated at the opportunity to attend and gave an excellent report to the August meeting of the Board of Control.

On our evaluation form we asked "Who Should Attend? (The 1971 Institute)."

Top Level Administrators	7
Students	3
Same Grouping	17
More Institutions	1
Attention to Specific Groups	1

While only twenty-nine responded directly to this question, references to the mix of participants appear as responses to other questions. For example, question 17, (form OE 1215), "Identify Specific Changes You Would Like to See if the Program Were to Continue." References are made to participation of presidents and vice presidents. Likewise, under question 18 (weaknesses) - the need for top level administrators to attend is mentioned by six respondents.

On the other hand, many references are made to the mixture of schools, appropriate mixture of administrators and related disciplines.

6. The faculty-participant ratio was 97:4 or approximately 25:1.

B. Staff

1. The 1970 Institute featured four visiting lecturers. Each lecturer was responsible for (1) a formal presentation, (2) respond to feedback sessions following small group discussions on their presentation, (3) conduct an interest discussion group on their topic, and (4) present a final summary of critical concerns as determined by their observations and conclusions from questions raised during the Institute on each major topic. This format was devised based upon evaluation results of the 1969 Institute. One of the "Improvements on Past Practices" as mentioned in the 1969 Institute report concerned the need to restructure the group discussions. The 1969 Institute provided for a question and answer period after each lecture plus small group (pre-assigned) sessions. The 1970 Institute eliminated the question and answer sessions, that tended to permit individual domination and speech making, in favor of pre-assigned small

groups and feedback sessions. The key to the success of this arrangements was that the lecturer replied and reacted to the feedback questions. The favorable response to this arrangement is fully supported by evaluations.

2. The following evaluation data reflects the highly favorable reactions to the excellent performance and contribution of the lecturers:

Form OE 1216

(15) Rate the following characteristics of the training program (on rating scale: 1-outstanding; 2-Very Good, 3-Good, 4-Adequate, and 5-Poor)

	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
Equality of Lecturers	32	16	2	0	0

(18) Major Strengths

Thirty-six responses referred specifically to the high quality lecturers. A typical response was, "the extremely high quality of the institute speakers and participants."

3. All four lecturers were full time. Group discussion leaders were also assigned on a full time basis.
4. The Institute was planned by an all-university planning committee representing Bay de Noc Community College, Gogebic Community College, Lake Superior State College, Michigan Technological University, Northern Michigan University, and Suomi College. These institutional representatives carry out vital planning projects with local administrators to insure participant involvement and relevancy of the curriculum.

C. Activities

1. As indicated previously, our basic objective was directed to the analysis and recommended solutions of communication dilemmas in higher education. We approached this objective with the following plan:
 - (a) Keynote address by Dr. Paul Sharp which was to be a hard-hitting and objective review of philosophy, principles, administrative communication problems and his recommended solutions.

- (b) An analysis of communication situations from the aspect of faculty governance was presented by Dr. David Feilman.
 - (c) Dr. Ralph Nichols served as our expert in the field of communications bringing his broad expertise in both a general and specific manner.
 - (d) Dr. Andre Delbecq approached the subject from the research and administrative organization aspects.
2. Participant reaction to the program objectives can be measured in several ways:
- (a) Question 15, form OE 1216, requested the participants to rate eight characteristics by following a five point rating scale. Out of 464 responses, 422 rated the eight variables either outstanding or very good. Thirty-eight responded "good," four responded "adequate," and there were no responses under "poor."
 - (b) Question 13, form OE 1216, asked the participants to indicate which area of focus in the training program was of primary value. Thirty-five of seventy responses selected "communication," while twenty-four indicated "attitude change" #1 and both received strong support for #2. We feel this information to be quite significant as we review our objectives. We were hopeful that "attitude change" would receive attention because such a condition would reflect positive feelings towards our accomplishment of change.
 - (c) An analysis of question 19, form OE 1216, reveals highly positive statements indicating significant awareness of professional growth as a result of attending the Institute. Such evidence of introspection began to appear in the evaluation data of the 1969 Institute. A review of the data will clearly substantiate the optimism of the planning committee in terms of the accomplishments of meeting objectives. Every statement is unique, constructive and very revealing of genuine professional growth.
 - (d) More on this subject will appear under "D - Evaluation" and "IV - Conclusions."
3. The planning committee did not employ new techniques of programming or methodology as such. We concentrated on our organizational efficiency such as:
- (a) Clear instructions to our lecturers as to objectives, clientele and subject matter suggestions. Considerable correspondence was held as ideas and viewpoints were exchanged.

- (b) Careful attention to the small group meetings and the feedback sessions that followed. The members of the planning committee served as discussion leaders bringing their planning experience to good advantage. All shared in the training aspect of discussion leaders especially the (1) need for individual participation, and (2) the need to control discussion to avoid rambling.
- (c) Our feedback sessions were very popular. We had each group report the three most important questions and/or concerns emanating from the group determined by priority vote. These questions were directed to the lecturer. This technique brought out specific answers to specific situations and thus was very meaningful to most participants.

4. Effectiveness of beginning and ending dates and duration of the program.

- (a) Question 5 of the Institute Evaluation Form asked participants to indicate their preference as to length of the Institute.

<u>Length</u>	<u>Response</u>
1 day	1
2 days	13
Same as present	48
Longer	1

- (b) Question 16, of Form OE 1216, refers to the reaction of participants to the length of the program:

<u>Too Long</u>	<u>Too Short</u>	<u>About the Right Length</u>
3	0	69

It would appear that the participants generally approved the length of the program which was one half day longer than the 1969 Institute. The 1970 Institute convened Wednesday, July 22 at noon, and adjourned Friday, July 24 at 2:00 p.m.

The beginning and ending dates were selected after taking into consideration summer session schedules and posing the question to all administrators prior to the 1968 pilot study. Question 17, OE 1216, asked to "Identify Specific Changes You Would Like to See If the Program Were to Continue." There were no references to a change in dates or days.

5. Effectiveness of Distribution of Staff and Participant Time for Formal Instruction or Unstructured Activities.

- (a) Each of the four past institutes, including the 1968 pilot study, has provided for recreation periods (usually Thursday afternoon from 3:00 p.m. until dinner, and free time after dinner).
- (b) Evaluation data from each institute have been replete with references to the value of informal contacts and discussions, such as, at meal times, session breaks, after-dinner "bull sessions," and card games, etc.
- (c) OE form 1216, question 15, "Identify Specific Changes...." and question 18, "Weaknesses...." reveal several recommendations for more free time for informal discussions and contacts. However, the totality of evaluation data overwhelmingly supports the 1970 format.
- (d) The planning committee feels there is improvement to be made in the "use of our informal and recreation hours." For example, there are several references to the need for meetings for subject matter department heads, deans and other titular designations. We feel this arrangement can be incorporated at least once during the institute and perhaps by structuring seating during a meal.

6. Participation Involvement in Planning Decisions

- (a) All participants in the Institute completed two "needs survey" forms. (see appendix) Form 1 was administered to provide the planning committee with the concerns around which to build the agenda. A second instrument was mailed to all participants in June, to reflect any specific suggestions for specific topics already decided for the Institute program.
- (b) The planning committee represented academic disciplines primarily but also had certain specialists in conference planning, management development and institutional research as members. Each member served in a liaison capacity with his constituents; represented the committee at department head meetings on each campus and reported back to the director and the committee. We were able to communicate our objectives, receive participant reactions to various planning committee needs and discuss participant needs quite effectively.

D. Evaluation

1. Plan of Evaluation

- (a) Two evaluation instruments were used for formal evaluation. Form OE 1216 was administered along with our own evaluation form.
- (b) Time for evaluation was provided for on the program as a scheduled item from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m. on Friday.
- (c) Evaluative conferences were held with the lecturers. Since the Institute was the first such meeting in which the lecturers participated, except Dr. Andre Delbecq, the lecturers' reactions were very similar to those of the participants.

2. Participant Follow-up

- (a) Since each of the six institutions located in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan is represented on the planning committee, each institution is being requested to organize follow-up sessions to implement ideas, techniques, philosophy or what have you, related to the uniqueness of the local campus situation.
- (b) We plan to administer another evaluation procedure to the participants to identify (1) specific application of information such as faculty involvement in decision making, (2) changes in personal administrative behavior, attitude change, etc., and (3) further needs to be met, possibly in the proposed follow-up meetings.
- (c) The Part E guidelines and procedures offered no problems during our planning for the Institute. We feel the guidelines are helpful and constructive with the following exception:

The requirement that budget and program reports be submitted within thirty days is somewhat impractical. We would suggest ninety days at a minimum.

IV. Conclusions

A. Impact on Planning Institutions' Regular Programs

- 1. The benefit to the fourteen participating institutions depends primarily on (1) the impetus generated by participants, and (2) support from top administrators. (We assume we are reporting on changes occurring in various ways). As heretofore mentioned, the magnanimity of institutions were not represented by their presidents or vice presidents so the process of change will be accomplished at lower levels and initiated upwards.

2. There is growing evidence of improved administrative procedures installed by participants. There are expressions of confidence in performing an administrative role and involve faculty in decision making. There are expressions on the evaluation forms that clearly indicate individual growth and sophistication in the administrative role.
3. Form OE 1216, question 17, asks participants to identify specific changes for future programs. There are responses referring to the need for skill development, breakdown sessions in specific areas of responsibility, structured "rap" sessions, case studies to apply solutions and other responses all indicating maturation and better role understanding.
4. Form OE 1216, question 19, asks, "If this program enhanced your career development sufficiently to justify the time that you devoted to it, explain how: " (Excerpts Noted)
 - (a) "Will provide greater insights into the area of my responsibility....."
 - (b) "I can better identify my administrative problems....."
 - (c) "Started me thinking of ways to improve my own situation."
 - (d) "It has brought about subtle changes in my attitude, point of view and perspective rather than techniques of 'how to do it' formulas."
 - (e) "It has given me a good inside view of the problems of those in other departments with which I must work."

The above are representative excerpts of answers that indicate the growth made in individual role perceptions and acknowledgement of the important facets of each role.

We believe we can safely conclude that our participants are going to affect change on their home campuses. They are going to be more knowledgeable and effective administrators.

B. Major Weaknesses in the 1970 Institute

1. Need for upper level administrators. The presidents of the three major four-year institutions in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan were absent due to an important ROTC conference at Fort Riley, Kansas. However, the attendance of vice presidents would have helped in many obvious ways. So, if we are privileged to have an EPDA grant next year, we most assuredly will concentrate on attendance from top level administrators.

2. More time for informal meetings - not a serious comment but we will evaluate the matter just the same.
3. There actually was no pattern of items to indicate program weaknesses. We do feel we can improve our problem solving techniques especially in the group discussion area however. The fine responses applauding the feedback sessions would indicate continuance of that technique.
4. The planning committee feels the need to provide not only attention to valid concerns but to get more at the specific solutions. The feedback sessions, with lecturer response, were positive steps towards specific answers, but we will work harder on this objective for the 1971 Institute.
5. We will also examine the possibility of meetings by specific title to get at solutions at a particular level.

C. Major Strength of the 1970 Institute

1. There is no doubt that the outstanding strength of the 1970 Institute program was the high quality of our resource people. The planning committee has learned from past Institutes that the selection of lecturers and resource people is the most critical decision to be made.
2. Equally outstanding were the physical facilities, meals and conference arrangements. An examination of the form OE 1216, question 18, revealed many responses to this point.
3. From the viewpoint of more internal analysis of the program, the evaluation responses refer to the following:
 - (a) Variety of viewpoints presented
 - (b) Excellent interaction of participants
 - (c) Represented pros and cons of educational problems
 - (d) Full opportunity to gain the most from each resource person
 - (e) Mixture of schools, mixture of idea and philosophies of speakers.
4. An obvious strength of the Institute as a "learning device" is the opportunity to meet with colleagues in similar positions, exchange ideas, share problems and solutions, and establish contacts for future communication.

5. The Institute Evaluation Form Question B-1 asked the question, "If an Institute is held (next summer), would you attend?"

Yes	73
Probably	20
Probably Not	0
No	1

It would appear that 93 of 94 responses on an affirmative basis would support our conclusions.

D. Plans for Program Development

1. Increased personnel. Our 1971 proposal for EPDA funding provides for 100 participants as compared to 90 in 1970. It should be stated here that:
 - (a) We admitted 105 participants in 1970 which was 15 over our commitment.
 - (b) The 1971 budget is less than the 1970 budget, even though we plan on 10 more participants.
 - (c) We plan to increase attendance from governing boards in 1971 and appropriate student observers.
2. Increased Training Facilities and Equipment. The conference facilities at Northern Michigan University (see brochure in appendix) are ideal. Living accommodations are excellent. We do not envisage any needed changes.
3. New Degree Program. It has always been our long range objective to establish a graduate degree in university administration. We now feel we have sufficient evaluation data to begin preliminary planning in this regard. Discussions in this respect will begin shortly.
4. Search for Additional Funds. To our knowledge, there are no funds available to support a program of this type other than EPDA. It is conceivable that at some point in time in the future, and when our geographic area reaches our objective of total upper midwest involvement, the Institute could be on a self-sustaining basis.
5. Reallocation of Staff. No change is planned except for the influence of change in program design.
6. Other. The 1970 Institute was, by far, the outstanding Institute of the four held thus far. The planning committee feels more confident in methodology and other planning skills. We are more knowledgeable of administrative needs in higher education and, have, through

the operation of the four institutes, developed improved expertise in planning effectively to meet these needs. There is much to learn and we are resolved to perpetuate the training programs in order to broaden our know-how in a project that we feel is critically needed in higher education.

We are indeed grateful to the Division of College Support, Bureau of Higher Education, U. S. Office of Education, for the privilege of sponsoring the Regional University Administrators' Institute. The evaluation data will support our conclusions and justify the significance of the program to the Division of College Support and the Congress that made the Institute possible.